

September 2008 : Youth remain key actors in motivating Nepali communities to work in support of the peace process. However, youth in the Central Terai are under a great deal of pressure from armed groups, political parties and politically-affiliated youth groups to join their ranks – many of whose activities pose a serious threat to Nepal's peace process.



Educating and mobilizing youth for peace building and conflict resolution has been an effective way to foster communal harmony and reduce the number of violent incidences that are now commonplace in many parts of the country.

USAID/OTI, in supporting five youth-focused activities through local partners, trained and mobilized 265 youth peace volunteers in 125 VDCs and four municipalities of Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, and Makawanpur districts. These youth trained and disseminated key information on peace and reconciliation, community conflict management, good governance, and human rights to more than 20,000 people in these districts. Among others, these activities included the formation of 63 Youth Listeners Groups in 45 VDCs of Bara and Rautahat districts and local youth peace committees in 10 VDCs of Makawanpur district that regularly discussed relevant issues and the ongoing peace process with local youth. The trained peace volunteers have also been writing articles in leading regional newspapers to disseminate information on peace and reconciliation, good governance, and human rights to a broader audience.

The impact of these peace volunteers in their communities has been substantial. They have established themselves as providers of accurate, important information regarding the transition and as community-level mediators in solving local-level disputes. One youth volunteer remarked that before the training he could not see how peace could come to Nepal. But after participating in the activities, he realized that peace building starts at the local level. By providing civic space for the mediation of community disputes, a moral voice has emerged among youth, one which

they want to use for positive change in their communities. Many VDC secretaries have requested USAID/OTI's grantees to replicate these activities in their respective VDCs that were not covered previously by this grant.